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the meadows. Its scent resembling that of new-mown hay, hawthorn, or heliotrope, is to our taste more fresh and fragrant than any. However, we would warn our readers to beware of its effects in a closed apartment, as it contains prussic acid in such large quantities as to be dangerous to life when emitted in sleeping rooms.

As we pass along to the flower garden we observe a most attractive flower, blooming in patches and clusters along the borders, the **SCARLET VERBENA** (*Verbena atrosanguinea*). The intensity of its bright colour is so dazzling to the eye, as to render it difficult to look upon it steadily. There are several varieties of the flowering verbenas (or *Verbena aubresia*), scarlet, rose colour, white, pale lilac, and blue. Most of them, and the splendid scarlet verbenas among the number, are natives of North America. The sweet-scented verbenas is no relation of the flowering plants of the same name; it belongs to a different family altogether; its botanical name is *Aloisia citriodora* (so called from its lemon-scented foliage).

The flowering Verbenas belongs to the well-known family of plants called vervain, renowned among the ancient Romans, and much praised by our ancestors for its medicinal virtues. It was supposed to possess many potent charms, and its roots used to be worn by superstitious old people round their necks as a preservative against the king's evil; while it was a grand ingredient in the love philters of foolish, sick-brained young folk. The common vervain (*Verbena officinalis*) flowers abundantly on the road-sides in many parts of Ireland.

The verbenas, or vervain, is frequently confounded, even in books on floriculture, with a plant similar in name, but different in nature—namely, the **VERONICA**, or speedwell. The *veronica* has leaves of pale, shining green, and flowers of pale blue, or white with blue streaks, and sometimes of flesh colour. It has many varieties in Ireland, and is found growing abundantly in most parts of the country in grassy pastures, and in moist, shady situations. The common speedwell (*veronica officinalis*) is met with on dry, sandy banks, barren heaths and woods, and in mountain pastures; its leaves have been sometimes used medicinally as tea. Another variety of the speedwell, called brooklime (*Veronica beccabunga*), with bright blue flowers, is chiefly found in ditches and rivulets. The German speedwell (*Veronica chamædrys*) has numerous flowers of large, bright blue, with starry, white rays on the petals, resembling an eye (hence, popularly called bird's eye), and is sometimes mistaken for the forget-me-not. It is generally met with in woods and on hedge-banks. There is also the water speedwell, with bluish flowers inclining to purple. The popular name of this pretty little flower the speedwell is, perhaps, given it because growing on the hedge-banks by the way side, its cheerful, bright-eyed little countenance seems to bid the weary traveller good speed or speed well; and to one who can, in fancy, catch its passing salute, it may seem as if

"Brighter than bright heaven is the speedwell blue
Clustering the banks."

The speedwell was held in much veneration by our simple ancestors, and called the Holy herb; but its Latin name, *veronica*, we regret to say, reveals and perpetuates a sad tale of folly and credulity, which has left its memorial even upon this sweet, innocent, little country flower. The name (*veronica vera icon*) means a true image, and was acquired from some story about a portrait and representation of the face of our Saviour on a relic, said to be lying at St. Peters, Rome, in the shape of a handkerchief, which was alleged by some to have covered our Saviour's face in the sepulchre, and by others to have been used on his way to Mount Calvary, whereupon it was miraculously impressed with the likeness of the face of our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It is impossible to speak of the gross absurdity of a miracle with so insignificant a result, and on so contemptible a subject as a pocket handkerchief, with that degree of respect and reverence with which we would desire to treat even the errors of so-called religion, and, therefore, we forbear from observations which might possibly give offence to even one of our readers. It is, alas, too much like the astounding stories of winking virgins, at Rimini, and holy coats at Treves—insults to the understanding of the faithful, which our Roman Catholic brethren in Ireland are saved from, by the broad and open daylight of public exposure which would await such practices if attempted here.

July and August are the chief months in the year for annual flowers, those sweet and transient visitants that need but little care to secure their reproduction. We scarcely know where to begin or how we shall end if we enter upon an enumeration of the annuals. However, we select a few—and first, the *nemophila insignis*—a very pretty little flower called, from its love of shady places, and highly ornamental as an edging to flower-beds or shrubberies. Although its introduction from California is so late as the year 1833, its pale blue flowers are now familiar to us all.

The *escholtzia* is another esteemed annual, with brilliant yellow and orange-coloured bell flowers on leaves of pale sea green. It is also a native of California and of North America, and very recently introduced among us. It has a very remarkable calyx which comes off like the extinguisher of a candle.

The **CLARKIAS** are also Californian annuals, of great beauty and variety, chiefly of rose-colour, white, and lilac. The *Calliopis bicolor* is another handsome, yellow, border annual, derived from the State of Missouri, in

America. The *Coreopsis tinctoria* is another very pretty annual, acquired from the Arkansas, in North America. The French marigold (*Tagetes patula*) is an old and familiar flower, derived from Mexico, in South America, though first, perhaps, known to us through France. It is called by the Italians, Death-flower (*fior de morto*), from a tradition that these flowers sprung up from the ground on which the blood of the unfortunate Mexicans had been spilled, who fell victims to the love of gold, and thirst of power, which induced the Spaniards to assail and destroy these unoffending people, under the pretext of converting them to the Roman Catholic religion. The beautiful convolvulus major (*Ipomæa purpurea*) with its transparent bells of various colours is also an American plant, as is the more useful *Convolvulus jalapa*, that yields the jalap of commerce. In our hedges we have a very graceful wild convolvulus, but wanting in the exquisite colouring and shades of the American variety. The convolvulus minor bears little resemblance to the other flowers of the same name, except that it is bell-shaped. Its flowers are much larger and generally of deep azure. The wax-like *phlox* is another contribution we have received from America. The Marvel of Peru (*Mirabilis jalapa*) was once a wonderful flower, and excited the astonishment of botanists some 200 years ago, from its great diversity and change of colours, varying from white to red, purple or yellow, and from the circumstance of its opening at night.

The *Fuchsia*, with its crimson bells, is also of American origin, introduced here from Peru or Chili, within the last sixty years. Its name is derived from one Fuchs, a German botanist.

The common Heliotrope (*Heliotropium Peruvianum*) is also of American extraction. Who does not know its delicate lilac flowers of sweetest perfume? There are some varieties of the heliotrope in the Southern Europe, with paler flowers of white or faint purple, but none so rich in the sweet fragrance which makes the common heliotrope such a favourite. Its name (translated into turnsole) is acquired from its blossoms, always turning towards and following the sun.

The **SUNFLOWER** (*Helianthus annuus*) is also an American plant—a native of Peru and Mexico. When the Spaniards first invaded Peru the natives were worshippers of the sun, and their virgins who officiated in the temple of the sun, were crowned with wreaths of sunflowers. The Spaniards professing the Christian faith exterminated the unfortunate idolaters instead of teaching them the mild and gentle doctrines of the Gospel.

The **DAHLIA** is the great flower of August, and a signal instance of the astonishing success of culture and education. It grows wild on the plains of Mexico, but is not so bright or so beautiful in colour or form as the Dahlia of our island. It is in its native plains a single flower of purple with no varieties of colour, and now, from cultivation, the florist in these countries, is enabled to exhibit it in varieties ranging through every shade, from dark purple, pink, scarlet, and crimson, to white. His art has hitherto failed to produce a blue Dahlia—the great desideratum among florists. The common purple Dahlia was that introduced from Mexico into Europe, by Baron Humboldt, the great naturalist; and has become a parent of 200 varieties, now in existence. In Mexico, the root of the Dahlia is boiled and eaten as the potato is here; but it is scarcely so palatable a root.

It thus appears how deeply we are indebted to America for our annual and perennial flowers, transplanted thence to adorn our gardens here. They form so many interesting links of association between us, that our exiled brethren, leaving the home of their fathers, may recognise, in the very flowers of their new home, old and familiar, and favourite acquaintances, and may indulge the hope, that as these little flowers have grown and flourished in their new beds in the British isles, so may our hardy and industrious emigrants take root and prosper in the free soil of the Western Continent. Our annuals contributed to America, in return for their pretty flowers, are the bone and sinew of our countrymen. Of these, upwards of two millions of Roman Catholics have been transplanted to America, within the last thirty years; and we are deeply interested in the inquiry how they have thriven in their new settlements, not alone in a temporal, but in a religious sense. As to temporal prosperity, the almost incredible amounts transmitted by the poor Irish emigrants to their families and relations at home, exceeding half a million sterling in the year, sufficiently demonstrate that our brethren on the other side of the Atlantic have materially bettered their temporal condition at least. But in connection with this (we will not say as the necessary accompaniment, but our readers will judge for themselves), we have it stated by an Irish Roman Catholic clergyman—the Rev. Mr. Mullen, of Clonmellon, in the County Westmeath, sent over by the Irish bishops expressly to America—that the Roman Catholic population of America, which, by the contributions of Irish and foreign emigration, and by the stated addition of births to the previous population from 1825 to 1852, should have been 3,970,000, stood at 1,980,000, being a loss to the (Roman) Catholic Church of two millions, in round numbers. There is no bribery or superism to account for this loss of two millions of Roman Catholics in America, announced by the Roman Catholic priest; but it is sufficiently accounted for by the freedom of inquiry and fairness of discussion—by the absence of Graigue riots and

souper crusades—by the impossibility of Shrule mobs, incited by priestly outrage—by the harmlessness of altar denunciations, like those lately poured forth from Castlebar, and five other places, on one respectable Roman Catholic gentleman, still a member of that Church, because he dared to insist upon the property of a deceased person being lawfully and rightly appropriated and disposed of. When the Roman Catholics of Ireland shall have acquired independence enough to think, and speak, and act as free men, and exercise the prerogative which God has given to them and commanded them to use—their plain, shrewd, common sense—we have no doubt they will be able to cast back upon the Scotch historian the taunt that, while sterile Scotland sustained herself during the terrible ordeal of the famine, fertile Ireland was behoven to the subscriptions of Protestant England, Saracen Turkey, and Hindoo India; and, instead of receiving half a million yearly, from proselytized Irishmen in America, will be enabled, out of the produce of their own independent industry, exercised on their native soil, to supply their own wants and to give a helping hand to their brethren in distress.

FARMING OPERATIONS FOR AUGUST.

(From the Irish Farmers' Gazette.)

From the cold, wet, and dull weather which has prevailed till within the last ten days, the ripening of the cereal crops has been, in most localities, considerably retarded, though they have advanced with great rapidity since warm weather set in, and much of the hay has been got up, which, though a short crop, in most instances gives a promise of good quality, and a luxuriant crop of after-grass.

Wheat, as a general rule, should be cut some days before it is dead ripe, which may vary from six to eight days, as the weather may be more or less of a ripening character, and which will require some attention and judgment to determine. When the grain, on being pressed between the fingers, ceases to give out milk, and has a tough, doughy consistence, it may be cut; but on no account should be allowed to get hard, as then much loss will be entailed by shedding the best and plumpest grains, and when sent to the mill it will yield a less percentage of flour, and a larger one of bran. Avoid cutting in wet weather; make the sheaves small, and stook as soon as made; if the night promises to be fair, they need not be capped; but if inclined to be wet, capping will be indispensable. When the straw and grain are thoroughly cured and dry, no time should be lost in carrying and stacking, as it deteriorates the sample considerably—both grain and straw—to allow it to get wet and dry alternately.

Barley should be allowed to stand till fully ripe, which is indicated by the head turning down. It is of the greatest importance, in malting barley particularly, that the whole of the grain should be of one uniform degree of ripeness, so that it may all sprout together.

Oats, like wheat, should be cut before it is thoroughly ripe, otherwise much loss will be sustained from the best grain shedding; it fills and ripens well in the stook, and the grain holds firmer in the chaff than when allowed to become over-ripe.

Turnips, Carrots, Parsnips, Mangels, &c., will require much and vigilant attention this month, in hoeing, singling, cleaning, and, above all things, the spaces between should be often and thoroughly grubbed to a good depth. All such operations should be well and thoroughly performed before the crops are so far advanced as to shut out all further operations.

Potatoes.—We have only to reiterate the directions given last week in case the disease should attack the crop—namely, to cut away, or cut off the haulm when the leaves become spotted, and before the stems are affected. Tread the surface well, and cover well with fresh earth. Should it be convenient to strew the beds or drills, before covering, with lime or peat charcoal, so much the better. Then sow with turnips; the following kinds will answer—white globe, yellow bullock, Maltese, yellow stone, or orange jelly; or sow rape; or the latter may be transplanted.

Meadows, after being cut, should now be top-dressed with rich compost, liquid manure, or some of the hand manures.

Laying down Land with Clover and Grass Seeds.—This is the best month in the year for sowing the land to meadow or permanent grass. A little rape—say 4 lbs. to the Irish acre—may be sown with the clover and grass seeds, with great advantage. It serves to shelter the young grass and clover, till they are established, and the bite it gives sheep has a double advantage in the sustenance it affords; and the manuring and treading of the animals, by which the vigour of the young plants and their tillering is increased.

Rape may be sown till the middle of next month, in warm, early localities; but the earlier this crop is now got in the better. If on stubble, manure should be supplied liberally, the land should be finely harrowed, then rolled and sown, well harrowed in, and finished with the roller. In dry land sow broadcast, but in wet land, six or eight feet ridges, with deep furrows between, should be adopted.

The Dairy Stock will now require more than usual attention; frequent removals to fresh grass will be indispensable; and when those begin to fail, fresh vetches, early cabbages, or green food should be supplied, otherwise they will rapidly fall off in their milk, which cannot be brought up again during the winter.